

Message Text

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ACTION AF-01

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-01 PA-01 INR-01 /005 W

-----180732Z 118995 /20/40

O 161120Z APR 77 ZFF-4 CORRECTED COPY FOR MCN

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO USINFO WASHDC

SECSTATE WASHDC 7342

INFO USUN MISSION NEW YORK 0000

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS PRETORIA 1850

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

RSA PRESS ON YOUNG STATEMENT

SUMMARY: ALLEGED REMARK BY USUN AMBASSADOR YOUNG THAT SAG WAS "ILLEGITIMATE" GOVT WAS TAKEN FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS WIRE SERVICE APRIL 15 AND RELAYED BY SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION TO RSA MEDIA. YOUNG'S REMARK PLUS REPORT THAT RSA FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA HAD SUMMONED USA AMBASSADOR BOWDLER TO SEEK CLARIFICATION WHETHER IT REPRESENTED OFFICIAL USG ATTITUDE MADE LATE EDITIONS APRIL 15 AFTERNOON NEWSPAPERS AND WAS LEAD ITEM RADIO/TV EVENING NEWSCASTS. REPORT THAT STATE DEPT "REPUDIATED" YOUNG MADE FRONT PAGE HEADLINES ALL BUT TWO RSA NEWSPAPERS APRIL 16. ALL QUOTED STATE DEPT NOTE TO SAG SAYING "ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT AGREE WITH A NUMBER OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN SOUTH AFRICA, IT IS INCORRECT TO SAY THAT THE SAG IS ILLEGIMATE." PRO-SAG AFRIKAANS AND OPPOSITION ENGLISH PAPERS ACROSS THE BOARD MADE POINT THAT THIS EFFECTIVELY "REPUDIATED" AMBASSADOR YOUNG. NO EDITORIAL COMMENT YET. FOLLOWING IS REVIEW OF COVERAGE IN MAJOR PAPERS. END SUMMARY.

1. JHB AFRIKAANS PAPER "BEELD" FRONT-PAGE

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HEANDLINE (FPH) "PIK WINS AGAINST ANDY YOUNG." REPORT SAID YOUNG REPUDIATED AFTER "URGENT SAG ACTION THROUGH MINISTER BOTHA" WHICH RESULTED IN "VERY QUICK APOLOGY" FROM USG. REPORT SAID BOTHA'S "FAST REACTION" TO YOUNG AP INTERVIEW "REGARDED AS INDICATION THE MATTER WAS SEEN IN VERY SERIOUS LIGHT INFORMED SOURCES SAID IT WOULD HAVE FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES FOR RSA/USA RELATIONS.

USG SUPPORT FOR YOUNG STATEMENT COULD HAVE RESULTED IN
UNTENABLE SITUATION LEADING TO BREAKING OFF OF RELATIONS."

2. JHB AFRIKAANS PAPER "DIE TRANSVALER" FPH "YOUNG KNOCKS
SA AGAIN." REPORT SAID "CRISIS IN RSA/USA RELATIONS AVERTED
LAST NIGHT WHEN USG INFORMED MINISTER BOTHA IT REPUDIATED
MR. YOUNG. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS HAS BEEN ACCEPTED IN
POLITICAL CIRCLES IN CAPE TOWN."

3. THE ENGLISH PAPER "RAND DAILY MAIL" IN STRAIGHT-FORWARD
PAGE THREE REPORT NOTED USG HAD REPUDIATED STATEMENT AND
THAT SAG WOULD TAKE THE MATTER FURTHER. PAPER PUT STORY
IN CONTEXT OTHER POLITICAL STATEMENTS MADE IN RSA IN PAST
WEEK: "MR. BOTHA'S TALK WITH MR. BOWDLER FOLLOWED THE
CONTROVERSIAL SPEECH EARLIER THIS WEEK BY INFORMATION MINISTER
MULDER WHO BITTERLY ATTACKED USA." CONTINUE: "DR. MULDER
SAID RSA WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER SEEKING FRIENDS OTHER THAN IN THE
WEST IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST RUSSIA, A REMARK IMMEDIATELY
INTERPRETED BY OPPOSITION LEADERS AS IMPLYING THAT SOUTH
AFRICA WAS PREPARED TO SEEK TIES WITH THE RED CHINESE."

4. POR-GOVERNMENT JHB ENGLISH PAPER "THE CITIZEN"
FPH "YOUNG GETS RAP ON SA." REPORT SAID USG "SLAPPED
DOWN" MR. YOUNG OVER STATEMENT AND THAT VANCE "PERSONALLY
TOLD MR. YOUNG HE WAS 'INCORRECT'". REPORT ADDED PM VORSTER
SATISFIED WITH CONTENT OF U.S. REPUDIATION AND SPEED WITH
WHICH IT RELAYED, BUT QUOTED FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA SAYING
A "FURTHER COMMUNICATION" WOULD BE SENT USG. REPORT
CONTINUED, "ALTHOUGH THE AIR HAS BEEN CLEARED BY THE
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REPUDIATION, THERE IS STILL THE QUESTION OF WHAT OBSERVERS
CALL THE 'INSULTING' AND 'DEROGATORY' WORDING OF MR. YOUNG'S
'ILLEGITIMACY' JIBE. IT IS THIS ASPECT THAT RSA IS LIKELY
TO TAKE UP IN ITS PROTEST. DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS IN CAPE TOWN
WERE QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT MR. YOUNG'S CREDIBILITY AS AN
AMERICAN SPOKESMAN HAS TAKEN A SEVERE BATTERING WITH HIS
LATEST GAFFE AND THAT THE STATE DEPT MUST NOW BE SERIOUSLY
CONSIDERING HIS USEFULNESS AS AN AMERICAN SPOKESMAN".
STORY ENDED BY NOTING UNITED PARTY SPOKESMAN JAPIE BASSON
SUPPORT FOR SAG STANCE. "HE SAID MR. YOUNG'S STATEMENT WAS
A SERIOUS MATTER . IT WAS NECESSARY TO TAKE IMMEDIATE
ACTION TO SEE TO IT THAT AMERICA SCALED DOWN ITS REPRESENTATION
IN SOUTH AFRICA."

5. IN SIDE-BAR STORY, CITIZEN QUOTED UNNAMED WASHINGTON
SOURCES SAYING "SACKS" OF PROTEST MAIL OVER YOUNG IS ARRIVING
DAILY TO CONGRESSMEN AND THAT YOUNG IS BECOMING "POLITICAL
DYNAMITE" FOR CARTER. STORY QUOTED SOURCE: "FROM RSA
POINT OF VIEW, YOUNG IS BECOMING ALMOST AN ASSET. THE MORE

EXTREME HE BECOMES ABOUT SOUTHERN AFRICA, THE MORE OTHERS
BEGIN TO WONDER IF IT IS NOT TIME TO REASSESS THE WHOLE
AMERICAN ATTITUDE TO THAT AREA."

6. DURBAN ENGLISH PAPER "NATAL MERCURY" FPH "YOUNG
SPARKS SA FURORE." REPORT SAID YOUNG STATEMENT
"SPARKED OFF MAJOR CRISIS" WHICH THREATENED DISRUPT
RELATIONS BUT THAT STATE DEPT'S REPUDIATION
"TOOK HEAT OUT OF THE LOOMING CONFRONTATION." REPORT ADDED:
"RSA EMBASSY OFFICIALS IN WASHDC DECLINED TO SAY WHETHER
STATE DEPT RESPONSE CLOSES THE MATTER OR WHETHER IT WILL
BE PRESSED FURTHER. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THE CARTER ADMIN WAS
TOLD THE YOUNG REMARK COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE DANGEROUS
OR ILL-TIMED CONSIDERING CURRENT PRESENCE OF DR. OWEN IN
SOUTHERN AFRICA ..."

7. CAPE TOWN AFRIKAANS PAPER "DIE BURGER" FPH "USA REPUDIATES
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YOUNG OVER RSA". REPORT SAID MINISTER BOTHA "WILL NOT
LEAVE THE MATTER AT THAT BUT WILL REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH
USG." REPORT ALSO SAID RSA EMBASSY WASHDC SAID TAPE OF
INTERVIEW "PROVED BEYOND DOUBT MR. YOUNG SAID THOSE WORDS."

8. NOTE: MAJOR BLACK - ORIENTED JOHANNESBURG
PAPER "THE WORLD" CARRIED NO REPORT ON ABOVE. "THE WORLD"
HAS PREVIOUSLY SUPPORTED REMARKS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA BY
AMBASSADOR YOUNG.HUGHES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, PERSONNEL CONDUCT, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Media Identifier:
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2786834
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CHANGED> mcm 20041007
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TAGS: SOPN, PDIP, PGOV, SF, US, UN, (YOUNG, ANDREW)
To: USIA STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/03e5cba3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009